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Yosemite Valley, August 20, 1876.

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# SUMMERING IN THE SIERRA.

"The Season" at the Yosemite Valley—A  
Disquisition on Tourists—In Memoriam—  
Lamon's Grave.

[FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.]

YOSEMITE VALLEY, August 20, 1876.

Considering the remoteness and irregularity of the many fountains and pathways of the Yosemite travel-stream, its flow has been remarkably constant. But this year the greater portion of its current seems to have been absorbed by the Centennial, as if it had fallen into a spongy bog or sandbed; a condition of things perhaps pardonable once a century, notwithstanding nature's incomparable exposition in this, her grandest mountain tabernacle. Only about one half, or at most two-thirds of the usual number of regular tourists have visited the valley this year; but on the other hand, the number of independent campers from the sun-beaten plains has been far greater, manifesting the hopeful fact, that since the completion of the wagon-roads California farmers are beginning to appreciate the magnificent advantages of rest, health and pure pleasure offered them in the mountains. Since they drive their own teams, and bring provisions from home, the expenses of the trip are very slight; and as there are no hardships to be endured, they frequently bring their families entire—wives, children and limp, molluscous babies a few months old. Delightful camping grounds are found along the banks of the river where grass is abundant, and where one may feel perfectly at home. The regular tourist usually does the noted trail points in two or three days, and departs with a sigh of relief, mingled with exultation, for having "something attempted, something done." The family camper remains as many weeks, dozing in the shade, sauntering about the falls, and occasionally making excursions of considerable length into the high Sierra. Those suffering from the intermittent fevers so prevalent throughout the moist lowlands of the Sacramento and San Joaquin, receive special blessings, while all are toned and cheered to endure their duties through the rest of the long, labor-filled year.

## ABOUT TOURISTS.

The regular tourist, ever on the flow, is one of the most characteristic productions of the present century; and however frivolous and inappreciative the poorer specimens may appear, viewed comprehensively they are a most hopeful and significant sign of the times, indicating at least the beginning of our return to nature, for going to the mountains is going home. Perhaps nowhere else along the channels of pleasure travel may so striking and interesting a variety of people be found together as in this comparatively wild and remote Yosemite. Men, women and children of every creed and color, from every nation under the sun manly, hard-fisted farmers from the old West; shrewd business men, builders, lawyers, doctors, and "divines;" scientists seeking causes; wealthy and elegant loafers trying to escape from themselves; the so-called high and low, titled and obscure, all in some degree seeing and loving fresh, wild beauty, and traveling to better purpose than they know, borne onward like ships at sea by currents they cannot understand.

Arriving in the valley, most parties keep together and fall into the hands of the local guides, by whom they are mounted on mustangs, and led in a lump along the best paying trails, which for most people is the best fate that could befall them; others composed of more heterogenous or more individualized character, go to pieces and follow their own ways. These are mostly members of Alpine clubs, sturdy Englishmen and Germans, possessed of good bone and muscle and fine æsthetic taste, with now and then a cannie Scot, still more cautiously independent, giving sober heed to all he hears, yet biding his time and keeping his own counsel in precious sequestration. These push out bravely over the adjacent mountains, radiating afar into the icy Alps, bent on beholding the beyond. They thread the mazes of the glorious forests, scale the loftiest peaks, bathe in the Alpine glow and follow the wild young streams in their courses down from the glaciers, through grandly-sculptured cañons; lapsing with them out of hollows and lake basins, slipping adown glossy inclines, and sharing in all their sternly exhilarating bounce and dance. Gentle, contemplative grandames, together with a few fine-grained specimens of fewer years, spend most of their time in the bottom of the valley admiring sky and cliff and water in a quaint way, enriching their lives infinitely more than their neighbors in perpetual motion, following one another Indian file along dusty trails, painfully doing Yosemite and themselves. Little children are, of course, the most delightfully natural of all, flashing around the hotel verandahs or out amid the green leaves, glowing in rainbow ruffles and ribbons, like butterflies and scarlet tanagers. They consider the lilies and bees and birds, nor are they altogether un-

conscious of the glorious sublimities about them, for one may see them at times gazing silently with upturned faces at the mighty cliffs and at the white water pouring out of the sky, their clear, natural wonderment offering a most refreshing contrast to the mean complacency and blindness of the finished tourist, who has seen all, knows all and is engulfed in eternal apathetic tranquility.

#### LANDLORDS, GUIDES, ETC., IN THE DUMPS.

There is not above a score of visitors in the valley all told, and of course landlords, stage-lords, guides and tourist-dealers in general, are downcast. Their countenances, usually so calm and suggestive of hidden power, are all cloudy and awry, and droop like frost-bitten ferns. Long and weary and easy are the hours they spend in meditation, and in languid discussions of their blighted harvest. "Is it," they anxiously inquire, "because of the more exciting attractions of the Centennial?" or has the discount on silver something to do with it? or, worse than all, are the very foundations of our business giving way by Yosemite beauty becoming unmarketable?"

#### A TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF LAMON.

I strolled across the meadow the other day to the grave of Lamon, the good old pioneer, the only one of all the Yosemite inhabitants who cordially and unreservedly adopted the valley as home. He came here sixteen years ago, built himself a cabin, and began to plant fruit trees and berry bushes on a fertile bed of alluvium at the head of the valley, near the mouth of Tenaya cañon, working faithfully from year to year, abiding winter and summer amid privations and hardships not easily appreciated now that the valley is developed to the world. During several winters he was entirely alone—the only human being in the valley. On one occasion a vague report got into circulation that he was murdered by Indians, and a company of volunteers made their way over the snow from Mariposa to find him. He was a fine, erect, whole-souled fellow, between six and seven feet high, with a broad, open face, bland and guileless as his pet oxen. He was no stranger to hunger and weariness, and knew well how to appreciate suffering of a like kind in others; and many there be, myself among the number, who can testify to his simple, unostentatious kindness that found expression in a thousand small deeds. After gaining sufficient means to enjoy a long afternoon of life in comparative affluence and ease, it seemed sad he should die so suddenly. He sleeps in a beautiful spot, in dry crystalline ground, not far from the foot of the glorious Yosemite Fall, and every stone and crystalline pressing on his coffin, is vibrating in harmony with its sublime music. Centuries ago a flood of surpassing grandeur resounded throughout all the river channels of the range. Every stream was magnified a hundred fold, and bore down immense quantities of moraine matter—sand, pebbles and huge angular boulders, sweeping them out into the levels like floating wood ships and depositing them in rough gray soil-beds. One of the largest of these ancient flood-beds in Yosemite lies outspread, delta-like, from the mouth of Indian Cañon and on its western margin Lamon has gone to sleep. The snow falls lightly there in winter, and noble oaks cast their shade above him through the leafy summer, and all the ground within a radius of a hundred yards is fairly covered with the bloom of gilia, choenactis and the fragrant monardella, varied here and there with tall, waving, golden rods, eriogonas and thickets of wild cherry. Two masons are at work here hewing blocks of Yosemite granite for Lamon's monument—an obelisk with massive base and pedestal, measuring about ten feet in height, plain and well-proportioned, but scarce needed with sublime Tissiack, Starr King and the monumental Sentinel Rock rising so near.

JOHN MUIR.